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MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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March 28, 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR:

MR. KISSINGER

FROM:

JOHN HOLDRIDGE *SK/12*

SUBJECT:

CIA Weekly Report on Communist
Infiltration in Indochina

The CIA has submitted its weekly summary, dated March 27, of recent Communist logistical and manpower developments in Indochina (Tab A).

The report indicates that substantial quantities of supplies are continuing to move into Laos -- where the North Vietnamese may be preparing the trail for wet season activity -- and that very heavy resupply activity continues within Laos, Cambodia and South Vietnam's Military Regions I and III. There are tentative signs that Hanoi may be ending its dry season infiltration program. Since March 4 we have received no report of regular infiltration groups leaving North Vietnam, although special-purpose groups involving 500 personnel were recently noted moving south through the Vinh area.

Logistics - North Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia

-- Resupply trucks and barges continue to move in North Vietnam's Panhandle area. On March 21, intercepts revealed that 96 vehicles were transiting the Dong Hoi area and on March 24, 50 vehicles were dispatched from Vinh to northern Laos.

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-- North Vietnam may be preparing for wet season resupply procedures. Recent photography revealed road improvements and bridge building south of Ban Karai and near Ban Phone.

-- In the central Laos Panhandle there were numerous examples of heavy vehicle activity during the week. Intercepts indicated that one logistics unit would handle 50-60 trucks "every day," and others referred to "the large convoys going south toward Group 471." On March 21, Group 471 reported that it had dispatched 90 vehicles.

-- Communications intelligence indicates that trenches are being dug along Routes 29 and 99 in the Panhandle for petroleum storage tanks, which can be stored far more readily in a bomb-free environment.

-- Vehicle activity remains heavy in the southern Laos/Cambodia border area. On March 23, for example, Group 470 reported that 77 vehicles were "on the roads." Further south, the Communist resupply activity is being hindered somewhat by the recent sharp increase in U. S. bombing in Cambodia.

-- In eastern Cambodia, the pattern of vehicle traffic flows is normal for this time of year. A major share is moving eastward on Route 19 to the B-3 Front area. South of Stung Treng vehicles are using a newly built road paralleling Route 13. Further south, supplies are moving on the Tonle Kong and Mekong, with some 30 flat-bottom motorboats, each capable of carrying 2 to 3 tons of supplies, reported in use by the NVA/VC on the Mekong.

Logistics - South Vietnam

-- High levels of resupply activity continue in northern South Vietnam. On March 21, 1,100 tons of ordnance and rice were shipped in Quang Tri Province, at least 60 tons of ammunition were moved on March 20 through Binh Tram 12's area, and on March 25 the same Binh Tram handled 200 tons of ordnance. On March 23, a logistic entity reported receiving 78 vehicles and 250 tons of weapons and ammunition.

-- In the western sector of MR-I heavy activity was also apparent. In the Khe Sanh and A Shau Valley area 70 vehicles were reported moving on March 20, 50 trucks were photographed on March 19, and

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-- At Khe Sanh, photography on March 21 revealed a newly occupied SAM site including two operational SA-2 missiles, radar and other equipment. In the northern A Shau, seven storage areas newly constructed since February and containing 32 buildings were observed along Route 616.

-- Significant road improvement and construction activity was detected during the past week in Quang Tin and Quang Ngai Provinces of MR-I.

-- In the Central Highlands, the Communists have, since March, constructed numerous ammunition caches along Route 19 in Pleiku Province.

-- In MR-III the pace of Communist logistic activity remains brisk, particularly in northeastern Tay Ninh Province, which is linked by new road construction to Mimot, Cambodia.

Personnel

-- There are tentative signs that Hanoi may be bringing its dry season infiltration program to a close. No reports of regular infiltration groups leaving from North Vietnam have occurred since March 4. During the past week, however, 17 special-purpose infiltration groups, including 500 personnel, were noted moving south through the Vinh area.

-- Currently there are some 20,000 personnel in the infiltration pipeline and an additional 150,000 have arrived at their destinations in South Vietnam, Cambodia and southern Laos since January 28. Infiltration starts since September 1, 1972 total 86,500.